

Madam Speaker, today is a great day.

This morning I woke with great optimism knowing that today the House would once again take up State Children's Health Insurance Program that will cover 11 million children. Providing health insurance to children whose families simply cannot afford is a top priority of the people I represent in Missouri.

With rising unemployment, covering children is more important than ever. The need for this legislation grows each day.

No longer will children be forced to visit an emergency room to receive basic medical care.

This is common-sense legislation at its best. Now children will be better prepared for learning and success in today's world economy.

This broad coalition will also soon have a friend in the White House with President-elect Barack Obama who has committed to making health care readily available to everyone starting with's children.

This bill would not be voted on today without the leadership of Chairman Waxman, Chairman-emeritus Dingell and Congressman Pallone. I thank them for their continued leadership.

America's children are on the threshold of a healthier future.